



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2020

The Honorable Philip D. Murphy
Governor of the State of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

We write to request critically needed funding for Warren and Sussex Counties that was appropriated to New Jersey through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

As you are aware, Warren and Sussex Counties, and their respective municipalities, did not receive federal funding through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) set forth in the CARES Act utilizing long-standing, unchangeable, and automatic formulas. Warren and Sussex Counties, along with Hunterdon and Salem Counties, did not meet any of the three criteria of these automatic, predetermined federal formulas: 1) counties with at least 500,000 people; 2) cities with populations more than 50,000; or 3) “principal cities,” which is a Census formula designation.

That said, beyond the set formulas which are out of our control, the State of New Jersey also received certain non-entitlement funding through the CDBG (more than \$4 million) and ESG (more than \$11 million) programs that you can allocate based on discretionary need throughout the State, particularly to help struggling municipalities that did not receive enough relief. We believe Sussex and Warren Counties meet that requirement and ask that you please immediately allocate the discretionary funding to these localities.

These two Counties remain in the so-called “hot” region of the outbreak in our State and need this critical funding to get through the challenging next weeks and months. This funding will give municipal governments the flexibility to best address their most urgent needs, continue providing essential services for residents, and help their communities recover from the economic fallout caused by this public health crisis.

New Jersey’s Department of Health has reported that the pandemic has not yet peaked and is expected to worsen in the coming weeks. Our State already has the unfortunate ranking of the second largest outbreak by total number of cases — second only to our closest neighbors to the north, New York. The number of positive cases in Warren and Sussex Counties has steadily increased in the past days and weeks. But, without a drive-through testing site and a lack of other

testing options, and based on conversations with local medical professionals, we believe the numbers of infection are far higher than the official count.

Separately, in the weeks ahead, as CARES Act resources are delivered through the State to local municipalities, we urge you to keep a watchful eye on what is directed to Sussex and Warren Counties. The federal legislation, among other relief dollars, has resources for local first responders, schools, and hospitals — not to mention what is currently being distributed directly in rescue dollars to small businesses, non-profits, and individuals. There is also a strong effort for the next round of emergency Coronavirus legislation, which we both support, to adjust any formulas that inadvertently exclude rural areas like ours. We'd be grateful for your public support of these changes.

Thank you for all of your tireless efforts on behalf of our State during this trying time and thank you for your consideration of this request on behalf of our shared constituents.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Steven V. Oroho
STATE SENATOR
New Jersey's 24th Legislative District